

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-01

PRS-01 L-03 /066 W  
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R 021408Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6546

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11773

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: THE DIRG AND THE GOVERNMENT

REF: ROME 13886 (NOTAL)

THERE FOLLOWS EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SUBJECT RELATIONSHIP  
REQUESTED REFTEL:

I. THE DIRG:

1. IN GENERAL, EMBASSY AGREES THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME IMPROVE-  
MENT IN EPMG'S CAPABILITIES. DIRG'S TOP LEADERSHIP SINCE DEATH OF  
GENERAL AMAN ALMOST A YEAR AGO, HAS REMAINED SURPRISINGLY COHESIVE  
AND STABLE. ALTHOUGH WE ARE WELL AWARE OF STRESSES AND STRAINS WHICH  
PERIODICALLY ARISE BETWEEN THEM, CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTE, FIRST VICE-  
CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM, AND SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN ATNAFU ABATE,  
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HAVE MANAGED TO DEAL WITH THESE SO AS TO PRESERVE A SEEMINGLY VI-  
ABLE WORKING RELATIONSHIP. EVEN AT SECOND ECHELON (VIZ. MAJOR SISAY  
HABTE, LT. COL. ASRATE DESTA), THE DIRG STRUCTURE HAS BEEN RELA-  
TIVELY STABLE.

2. THIS IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE GIVEN THE TWO MAJOR COUP  
ATTEMPTS WHICH OCCURRED DURING THIS ELEVEN MONTH PERIOD. THE  
OUTER RING OF DIRG TECHNICIANS HAS ALSO STOOD UP WELL, E.G. MAJOR  
KIROS ALEMAYEHU REMAINS AT HEAD OF THE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT  
CAMPAIGN DESPITE REPEATED AND ACERBIC CRITICISM AND MAJOR NADEW  
ZEKARIAS REMAINS IN CHARGE OF THE MEDIA.

3. WE KNOW OF SEVERAL DIRG COMMITTEES WITH SPECIFIC AREAS OF  
RESPONSIBILITY SUCH AS SOCIAL AFFAIRS, NATIONALIZATIONS, LEGAL  
AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, POLITICAL AFFIARS, PUBLIC  
SECURITY, ETC. THERE ALSO APPEARS TO BE AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
CONSISTING OF A DOZEN OR SO MEMBERS WITH A COORDINATION AND DECISION-  
MAKING FUNCTION.

4. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS WE HAVE NOTED THAT INCREASING  
NUMBERS OF PMAC MEMBERS ARE BEING PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED AS SUCH. WE  
HAVE BEEN COLLECTING THEIR NAMES AND NOW HAVE A LIST OF OVER 60 OR  
SO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN CITED IN THE MEDIA IN CONNECTION WITH  
GIVEN PROGRAMS OR TASKS. AS EXPECTED MOST OF THESE ARE NON-  
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS. WE HAVE ALSO GAINED THE IMPRESSION --  
ALTHOUGH WE WOULD BE HARD PUT TO DOCUMENT IT -- THAT IN ADDITION  
TO THIS STRUCTURING, THERE HAS BEEN SOME SLIMMING IN DIRG MEMBER-  
SHIP ROLLS. IN PART THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY  
ARREST OF PLOTTERS AND SUSPECTS, BY ROTATION AND IN PART BY OUT-  
ASSIGNMENT OF DIRG MEMBERS BACK INTO THE UNITS AND/OR THE PRO-  
VINCES.

5. DURING THIS PERIOD, THERE HAS, OF COURSE, ALSO BEEN A GAIN OF  
EXPERIENCE AND A FIRMER GRASP OF NATIONAL PROBLEMS ON THE PART OF  
DIRG POLICY-MAKERS, TOGETHER WITH A RECOGNITION THAT GOVERNANCE  
REQUIRES THEIR GREATER ACCESSIBILITY AND SOME RELAXATION OF  
ANONYMITY. THEY ALSO APPEAR TO HAVE GAINED A GREATER APPRECIATION  
OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN MAKING THE GOVERNMENT  
WORK.

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6. IN CERTAIN AREAS, FINALLY, THERE APPEARS TO BE A FAIRLY SOLID  
DIRG CONSENSUS ON POLICY. OTHERS REMAIN THE SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY  
AND INDECISION. FREQUENTLY, THERE IS APPARENT AGREEMENT ON  
OBJECTIVES AND DISAGREEMENT ON THE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THEM. THE  
DIRG HAS LATELY DEMONSTRATED SOME FLEXIBILITY IN APPLYING POLI-  
CIES ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES OF ADMINISTRATION  
(PRICE CONTROL) OR FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS (MINERALS EXPLORATION).

II. THE GOVERNMENT:

1. IF WE LABELED GOVERNMENT THE ENTIRE CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FROM THE CABINET ON DOWN TO THE WOREDA (COUNTY), WE FIND THAT IT HAS UNDERGONE AND CONTINUES TO UNDERGO MAJOR CHANGES WITH ALL THE STRESSES AND STRAINS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED THEREWITH. ONCE AGAIN, THE COMPOSITION OF THE CIVILIAN CABINET HAS BEEN RELATIVELY STABLE.. BELOW THE MINISTERS, HOWEVER, THE PERMANENT SECRETARY HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AS DEPARTMENTAL MANAGER AND VICE-MINISTERS (ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO ASSISTANT SECRETARIES IN OUR PARLANCE) ARE BEING SYSTEMATICALLY ELIMINATED. REPLACEMENTS HAVE BEEN OF A GENERALLY HIGHER CALIBER.

IT IS AT LOWER END OF THE STRUCTURE, MOREOVER, THAT THE CHANGES HAVE BEEN GREATEST IN THAT A REAL AND GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORT CPPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE TO ASSIGN IN THE AWRAJAS AND WOREDAS CAPABLE AND DEDICATED CIVILIAN EXPERTS IN THE EXPECTATION OF EVENTUALLY PLACING UPON THEM A FAR LARGER SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT.

2. LASTLY, THE SOCIALIZATION OF ETHIOPIA, VIZ., THE EXPANSION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR WITH ITS CONCURRENT ASSUMPTION OF A SHARPLY LARGER MANAGEMENT ROLE BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, HAS GREATLY EXTENDED GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. A PRIMARY PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AND REMAINS THE FACT OF ITS PUTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS LACK OF REAL AUTHORITY. THE PMAC STILL HAS A TENDENCY TO MAKE BROAD POLICY STATEMENTS WITHOUT PROPER DISCUSSIONS WITH AND ADVICE FROM THE TECHNICAL EXPERTS IN GOVERNMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN REPEATED INSTANCES (THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF URBAN LAND REFORM WAS ONE) WHERE THE GOVERNMENT EXPERTS TRYING TO PREPARE THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WERE CAUGHT BY SURPRISE BY THE PMAC'S POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT. IN MOST INSTANCES, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE INTRA-GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION OF FUTURE POLICY DECISIONS (RURAL LAND REFORM, NATIONALIZATION OF BANKS AND INSURANCE AGENCIES, ETC.). WE HAVE

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ALSO NOTED THAT, IN SPITE OF THESE DISCUSSIONS AND EXPERT ADVICE, THE PMAC WILL TAKE ACTION CONTRARY TO THAT ADVICE OR REDUCE THE NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A DESIRED CONSENSUS FROM THEM. AT SUCH TIMES, THE RESULTS HAVE OFTEN BEEN NEGATIVE AND THIS HAS LED TO BELATED COORDINATION EFFORTS AND CORRECTIONS.

3. THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS MAY BE SUMMARIZED BY SAYING THAT OPERATIONS OF EPMG CIVILIAN CADRE ARE REASONABLY EFFECTIVE WHERE THE GUIDELINES ARE CLEAR AND THERE IS DIRG CONSENSUS NOT ONLY ON POLICY OBJECTIVES BUT ON WAYS AND MEANS. IN ALL OTHER AREAS, SLIPPAGE AND INDECISION REMAINS WIDELY PREVALENT.  
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